

## Contributed

### BAPTIST HISTORY AS EXHIBITED IN THEIR RECENT WRITINGS.

#### III.

Writing of the early English Baptist Church, which through Richard Blunt traced its origin back into Holland Dr. Newman says: "It was an almost inevitable consequence of the circumstances under which these churches were formed that open communion should have been to some extent practiced. . . . William Kiffin became a staunch advocate of restricted communion; Henry Jessey, John Tombes, John Bunyan, and others advocated and practiced open communion. Restricted communion gained ground during the eighteenth century; but toward the close of that century and during the present century, under the influence of Robert Robinson, Robert Hall, and Charles H. Spurgeon, open communion has become very general among English, but not among Welsh and Scotch Baptists." (Amer. Ch. Hist. Ser. Vol. II pp. 53, 54.) Dr. Whitsitt writes of the "General Baptists of the New Connection" in England, "of late they have become open communion in their practice." (T. Univ. Ency. Vol. I sub-voice) Dr. Newman writes in New Schaff-Herzog of the "General Baptists" of England: "Until recent times the General Baptists had almost uniformly practiced restricted communion and vigorously excluded Calvinistic Baptists from the Supper. During the nineteenth century their views on this matter became assimilated to those of the great majority of the 'Particular Baptists' (of England). (Vol. I, p. 463 b). Again, 'It has been noticed that the first Particular Baptist congregations were formed by peaceable withdrawal from a pedobaptist Church and that Jessey remained pastor of a mixed church. Open communion was from the first practiced by most of the churches. Controversy between Kiffin and Bunyan in which the latter denied that differences of opinion and practice respecting an external rite should be allowed to hinder the manifestation of Christian love and brotherhood in the Supper, left the question an open one.' (Vol. I, p. 464 a). 'The most eminent English Baptist leaders of the present day carry their liberality so far as to practice open or mixed membership. Alexander MacLaren, the famous Manchester preacher, was for many years pastor of a mixed church. The same is true of Dr. Clifford. F. B. Meyer, president of the Baptist Union 1905-06 was for some years pastor of a pedobaptist congregation in London.' (Vol. I p. 466 a). Commenting upon the 'Christian Connection' of the U. S. and their resemblance to the Baptist Dr. Newman writes: 'They practice open communion and admit to membership those who do not agree with them respecting immersion. In England they would pass for a satisfactory Baptist.' This last comment should give us a pretty clear

idea of the English Baptists. In treating of 'the Minor Baptist Parties in the U. S.' Dr. Newman mentions, 'The Free Will Baptists \* \* \* who \* \* \* are open communion Baptists \* \* \* present membership is 86,322': 'The General Baptist Churches of the older English type \* \* \* adopted open communion \* \* \* had increased to 21,362 in 1890.' Here then is more than 100,000 Baptists in the U. S. practicing open communion. Further he writes, 'Negotiations looking to the union of the Free-Will Baptists' (Open communionists) 'with the Regular Baptists of the North are pending with good prospects of success.' (New Schaff-Herzog Vol. I p. 476 b). A later note may be appended of the talked of union between the Disciples of Christ and the Regular Baptists of the South led by Prest. E. Y. Mullins, D.D., LL.D., of 'The Southern Baptist Theol. Seminary of Louisville,' and the 'alien baptism' controversy which has been precipitated, in which many Baptists express themselves as willing to recognize the Disciples. In view of these quotations with reference to communion, what becomes of 'the church' contention of our Baptist friends? and if they continue to persist in their claim, then how can they consistently recognize these and tabulate them and claim them as Baptist Churches? If they will recognize as a church, a church of 'mixed membership,' how mixed shall it be, what proportion of 'mixed' members will put a church beyond recognition? I serve a church of 'mixed' members, about one-eighth of them having been formerly 'Regular Baptists,' and another church one-sixth of them have been 'Regular Baptists.' Another note—does not the history of the Baptist Churches reveal a constant trend toward open communion? And, in the light of these things, once more, what becomes of 'the Church'?

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P. S.—Just as I send over these lines I have received one of my Baptist papers for the week, which has an editorial that in part is as follows: 'If the Baptists are wrong in their contention that there have been local Baptist churches on the earth since the apostolic days, we fail to see any reason why they should claim to have the sole right to the ordinances, baptism and the Supper of the Lord. But if they are right in their contention about the matter, we believe that the constituents of all creeds should be taught the truthfulness of the Baptist position. We are prepared to prove it, our enemies that the Baptists can trace a line of Baptist succession back into apostolic time.' 'And, were it not for the fact that the Bible and history enables us to satisfy our own mind as to the truthfulness of church succession, we should be the most miserable men in all the country.' (Baptist Echo, Feb. 9, 1909.) We will just refer the editor to the professors of church history in the only two theological seminaries of the Baptist Church in the South, one of which is in his own State.

### LETTER TO REV. R. ORME FLINN.

My Dear Brother:

It was a year ago last January that I replied to a letter of yours agreeing that certain of us would unite daily with you and your people in special prayer for an outpouring of God's Spirit on your people at home and on us and our work out here. I am glad to write you that these prayers have been answered in our church here. We have just closed one of the most refreshing meetings I have ever experienced. As you know, there has been in a number of places in Korea, Manchuria and in China proper a wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit within the last two years. This blessing has been coming south (so to speak), getting nearer and nearer to us. We have long felt that there is a coldness in the church here which must prevent any effective growth, and we have prayed earnestly that the real blessing and true revival might come to us, both missionaries and Chinese. The blessing had already come to Nanking and Tungshang.

This is not a good time of the year for a special meeting because a large number of the church members are busy day and night with the silk worms. We would never have selected this time but it was so much on our hearts that we began a daily prayer-meeting among ourselves, the missionaries. This continued for about a week. We then consulted with the Chinese office bearers in the church and found that they too had the same thing in mind, a longing for a blessing which we had not yet experienced. It was decided to hold a daily prayer-meeting in Chinese for a half hour, beginning at 7:45 o'clock, a. m., the only time that could be found when other work would not prevent many from coming. This meeting was not attended by many besides the missionaries, elders, deacons and Bible women. After a week it seemed laid on all of us that we ought to begin a meeting in the chapel, the prayer-meetings having been held in a private house. Announcement was made on Sunday that we would begin that night and hold two meetings daily, one at 3:30 in the afternoon and one at 7:30 at night. The school schedules were so arranged that all boys, who desired to do so, could attend both meetings. From the beginning there was a good attendance especially at the night services. Much of the time was spent on our knees in prayer, the burden of the prayers being that the Holy Spirit might manifest his presence among us.

On Wednesday night the first public confession of sin was made by one of the teachers in the school and one of the most prominent men in the church. He had been guilty of a number of things that made him unhappy until he was brought to confess them and publicly ask for forgiveness. One of the elders then confessed to certain inconsistencies in his life when he was a deacon; two dollars had passed through his hands which he had failed to credit. He had